

Message Text

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ACTION AF-18

INFO OCT-01 NEA-10 ADP-00 PPT-02 SCA-01 CPR-02 L-03 H-03

PER-05 SCS-03 PM-07 NSC-10 SS-15 RSC-01 PRS-01 USIA-15

CIAE-00 INR-10 NSAE-00 DODE-00 CU-04 A-01 EB-11

COME-00 INT-08 RSR-01 /132 W
----- 097000

P R 301327Z AUG 73

FM AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 0473

INFO USINT CAIRO

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 TRIPOLI 1117

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR CPAS LY

SUBJECT: PASSPORT PROBLEM: REMARKS BY MFA OFFICIAL

REF: TRIPOLI 1101

SUMMARY: LARG HAS DECIDED TO FILL OUT ITS PASSPORTS IN ENGLISH AS WELL AS IN ARABIC, CHARGE TOLD TODAY. CLEAR IMPLICATION OF ORIGINAL PRESENTATION OF THIS FACT WAS THAT LARG HOPED USG COULD RECIPROCATATE BY SOMEHOW USING ARABIC IN ITS PASSPORTS. CHARGE DISCOURAGED THIS IDEA AND HIS MFA INTERLOCUTOR LATER DENIED THAT HE WAS PROPOSING A DEAL. BELIEVE WE ARE ON RIGHT TRACK AND SHOULD CONTINUE TO STAND FAST. END SUMMARY.

1. CHARGE WAS CALLED DOWN AUGUST 30 BY MFA ACTING DIRECTOR GENERAL FOR TREATIES AND LEGAL AFFAIRES, SULEIMAN ATTIGA, TO DISCUSS "PASSPORT PROBLEM". EMBOFF ACCOMPANIED CHARGE.

2. CONTRARY TO OUR EXPECTATIONS, SULEIMAN DID NOT FOCUS NARROWLY ON THE CURRENT LIBYAN ASPECT OF THE
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PROBLEM, NAMELY DELAYS IN VISAS FOR DEPENDENTS OF

STUDENTS. RATHER, HE MADE A PRESENTATION AS FOLLOWS:
HE HAD BEEN ASKED TO TALK TO CHARGE ABOUT RESTRICTIONS
ON TRAVEL OF AMERICANS AND LIBYANS IN GENERAL. THE
LIBYAN CHARGE IN WASHINGTON HUSSEIN ZAGGAR HAD
INDICATED THAT THE DEPARTMENT SEEMED INCLINED TO
SHOW SOME FLEXIBILITY ON THE SUBJECT (HE DID NOT
EXPLAIN PRECISELY WHAT WAS MEANT BY THIS). IN ANY
CASE, THE MFA WOULD BE INTERESTED IN KNOWING WHAT THAT
FLEXIBILITY MIGHT BE, E.G. THE INSERTION OF A PAGE
PRINTED IN ARABIC, OR WHATEVER. THE LARG HAD MADE A
DECISION TO PRINT ITS PASSPORTS IN ENGLISH AS WELL AS
ARABIC AND TO FILL THEM OUT IN BOTH LANGUAGES. ALL
MISSIONS WOULD RECEIVE A CIRCULAR NOTE TO THIS EFFECT
WITHIN A COUPLE OF DAYS. COULD CHARGE STATE WHAT THE
POSITION OF THE USG WAS ON THIS MATTER?

3. CHARGE REPLIED THAT THE LARG'S DECISION TO PRINT
AND FILL OUT PASSPORTS IN ENGLISH AS WELL AS ARABIC
WAS A NEW FACT THAT, OF COURSE, WOULD BE REPORTED.
THE USG POSITION HAD REMAINED ESSENTIALLY UNCHANGED
SINCE THE SUBMISSION OF OUR AIDE MEMOIRE OF NOVEMBER 15,
1972, WHICH CHARGE SUMMARIZED. THAT POSITION BOILED
DOWN TO THE PRINCIPLE OF EQUAL TREATMENT. JUST AS THE
USG RECOGNIZES THE RIGHT OF LARG TO ISSUE PASSPORTS IN
ANY LANGUAGES IT CHOOSES, THE USG EXPECTS THE LARG TO
RECOGNIZE U.S. PASSPORTS PRINTED IN OUR NATIONAL LANGUAGE.
CORRESPONDINGLY, THE USG BELIEVED THAT THE LARG DID NOT
HAVE THE RIGHT TO REQUIRE THE USG TO PRINT ITS PASSPORTS
IN A LANGUAGE OTHER THAN ENGLISH. COLONEL QADHAFI HAD
HIMSELF STATED THIS PRINCIPLE IN HIS INTERVIEW THAT WAS
PUBLISHED IN AL-AHRAM ON MAY 27. (ATTIGA SIMPLY NODDED
WHEN HE HEARD THIS). CHARGE ALSO POINTED OUT THE LEGAL
AND PRACTICAL DIFFICULTIES FOR THE USG OF FOLLOWING ANY
OTHER COURSE. AT THE SAME TIME HE WOULD POINT OUT
THAT USG TOO HOPES FOR A RESOLUTION OF PASSPORT PROBLEMS
ON BOTH SIDES, AND THAT IN FACT THERE HAD BEEN NO
DIFFICULTIES IN THIS AREA PRIOR TO JANUARY ONE.

4. ATTIGA RETURNED TO THE THEME THAT LARG WAS NOW
INTERESTED IN "SOLVING THE PASSPORT ISSUE" WITH THE
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USG. THIS TIME HE URGED THAT THE U.S. ADOPT A RUBBER
STAMP LIKE OTHER COUNTRIES. "I CAN GUARANTEE THAT IF
YOU DO THAT THERE WILL BE NO MORE PROBLEMS FOR AMERICANS."
CHARGE IMMEDIATELY REPLIED THAT THIS WAS "INCREDIBLE"
AS LARG HAD MADE PERFECTLY PLAIN, EVEN BY NOTE, THAT
RUBBER STAMPS WERE ONLY A TEMPORARY SOLUTION AND THAT
THE LARG'S REQUEST WAS FOR PRINTING PASSPORTS IN ARABIC.
ACCOMPANYING EMBOFF EXPRESSED SAME INCREDULITY. ATTIGA

THEN SAID "WHAT YOU ARE SAYING, THEN, IS THAT THERE IS NO FLEXIBILITY ON YOUR SIDE." CHARGE REPLIED THAT USG HAD ALWAYS BEEN FLEXIBLE ENOUGH IF THERE WAS RECIPROCITY, BUT THAT IT WAS INCONCEIVABLE THE USG WOULD START PRINTING PASSPORTS IN ANY OTHER LANGUAGE THAN ENGLISH. ATTIGA EXPRESSED GREAT DISAPPOINTMENT THAT USG COULD NOT AT LEAST ACCEPT A RUBBER STAMP.

5. SINCE IN HIS INITIAL PRESENTATION ATTIGA HAD SEEMED TO LINK THE LARG DECISION REGARDING PRINTING PASSPORTS IN ENGLISH AS WELL AS ARABIC WITH A HOPED-FOR "FLEXIBILITY" ON THE U.S. SIDE, CHARGE SUMMARIZED ATTIGA'S POSITION TO HIM MAKING THE IMPLICATION EXPLICIT. ATTIGA DENIED THAT THIS IMPLICATION WAS INTENDED, HOWEVER, AND EMPHASIZED THAT THE LARG'S DECISION WAS QUITE INDEPENDENT AND FINAL. HE ALSO INDICATED THAT THE MINISTRY HAD RECEIVED INSTRUCTIONS FROM THE RCC ON THE WHOLE SUBJECT OF PASSPORTS WITHIN THE LAST TWO DAYS, AND THAT HIS TALK WITH THE CHARGE WAS AT THE REQUEST OF THE ACTING MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS. HE SAID HE WOULD REPORT TO HIM REGRETFULLY THAT THE AMERICAN POSITION HAD NOT CHANGED. CHARGE SAID THAT WAS CORRECT.

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CIAE-00 INR-10 NSAE-00 DODE-00 CU-04 A-01 EB-11

COME-00 INT-08 RSR-01 /132 W

----- 096353

P R 301326Z AUG 73

FM AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 0474 PRIORITY

INFO USINT CAIRO

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 TRIPOLI 1117

6. IN PASSING, CHARGE BRIEFED ATTIGA, WHO DID NOT APPEAR AWARE OF THE FACTS, ON THE PROBLEM OF CONTEMPORARY VISAS FOR DEPENDENTS OF ELIGIBLE PRINCIPALS APPLYING AT THE LIBYAN EMBASSY WASHINGTON, ON THE OCCASIONAL BUT SERIOUS PROBLEMS OF DENIALS OF ENTRY TO AMERICAN DEPENDENTS AT THE AIRPORT, ON THE FACT THAT THE EMBASSY HAD ONLY ONE CONSULAR OFFICER, WHO WAS OVERWORKED AND HAD INSTRUCTIONS TO GIVE PRIORITY TO OTHER WORK BESIDES VISAS, AND ON THE FACT THAT CHARGE HAD NOT BEEN GRANTED AN INTERVIEW AT THE RCC OR MINISTERIAL LEVEL SINCE JANUARY 1, EXCEPT FOR ONE APPOINTMENT WITH FORMIN KIKHYA. CHARGE ALSO MADE CLEAR THAT THERE WAS NO SPLIT BETWEEN THE DEPT AND THE EMBASSY ON PASSPORT POLICIES, THAT THE DEPARTMENT MADE POLICY AND THE EMBASSY CARRIED IT OUT, AND THAT IF THE LARG WAS NOT HAPPY WITH THOSE POLICIES ONE APPROACH WOULD BE FOR SOMEBODY AT A HIGH LEVEL IN THE LARG TO DISCUSS THE MATTER WITH THE CHARGE.

7. CHARGE TOOK OPPORTUNITY TO RAISE SEVERAL OTHER MATTERS INCLUDING A STRONG DEMAND FOR PROMPT PAYMENT OF THE EMBASSY'S BALFOUR DAY CLAIM (SEPT). ALSO POINTED OUT PASSPORTS WERE A SMALL MATTER COMPARED TO CONFIDENTIAL

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THE US/LIBYAN RELATIONS IN THE FIELD OF PETROLEUM. LARG HAD RECENTLY NATIONALIZED ONE AMERICAN COMPANY AND FORCED OTHER INTO PARTIAL NATIONALIZATION. USG URGED CONTINUED TALKS WITH THE REMAINING COMPANIES UNTIL THERE IS AN AMICABLE SOLUTION. INSTEAD OF COOPERATION IN THIS FIELD THERE WAS CONSTANT HARASSMENT. LATEST EVENT WAS TWO-WEEKS' NOTICE TO PRESIDENT OF MOBIL TO LEAVE HIS HOUSE DESPITE A VALID LEASE. SIMILAR PROBLEMS HAD BEEN EXPERIENCED RECENTLY BY OTHER AMERICAN COMPANIES WITH RESIDENCES IN THAT AREA (FORMER GARGOUR ESTATE).

8. COMMENT: AS BEST WE CAN ANALYZE IT AT THIS TIME, THE MOTIVE FOR TODAY'S INTERVIEW WAS AS FOLLOWS: LARG DECIDED FOR SOME REASON, POSSIBLY AN AGREEMENT WITH EGYPT REGARDING STANDARDIZATION OF PASSPORTS, TO START ISSUING PASSPORTS PRINTED NOT ONLY IN ENGLISH AS WELL AS ARABIC (AS SINCE JANUARY 1972) BUT FILLED OUT IN ENGLISH TOO. THIS DECISION HAD NOTHING TO DO WITH OUR PASSPORT POLICIES, BUT AT SAME TIME LARG IS UNDER HEAVY PRESSURE FROM MANY STUDENTS REGARDING VISAS FOR THEIR FAMILIES. SO SOMEONE IN RCC OR MFA DECIDED TO TRY TO USE THE LARG DECISION TO LEVER THE USG INTO ACCEPTING ARABIC SOMEHOW, AND THUS SOLVE THE STUDENTS' PROBLEM. THIS DID NOT WORK. BELIEVE WE ARE ON

THE RIGHT TRACK AND LARG NOW KNOWS AT A HIGHER LEVEL
THAT THE SOLUTION TO OUR DELAYING OF VISAS IS THEIR
DROPPING OF RESTRICTIONS. REVIEWING EMBASSY'S
PROPOSED DRAFT NOTE (REFTEL PARA 4) IN THIS LIGHT, IT
STILL SEEMS APPROPRIATE TO THE SITUATION AS WE SEE IT.
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: n/a
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 30 AUG 1973
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: elyme
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1973TRIPOL01117
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS JOSIF
Errors: N/A
Film Number: n/a
From: TRIPOLI
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1973/newtext/t1973084/aaaaacqy.tel
Line Count: 229
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE
Office: ACTION AF
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 5
Previous Channel Indicators:
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: TRIPOLI 1101
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: elyme
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 10 DEC 2001
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <10-Dec-2001 by martinml>; APPROVED <16-Jan-2002 by elyme>
Review Markings:

Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: PASSPORT PROBLEM: REMARKS BY MFA OFFICIAL
TAGS: PFOR, CPAS, LY
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005